The Congregationalist

COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE
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Fellowship at Meal Time, National Association Annual Meeting

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"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

THE 1959 ANNUAL MEETING

An Editorial

The Annual Meeting of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches at Los Angeles, June 30 — July 1 and 2, 1959, stands out in the mind of a man who has attended all its meetings as one which indicates a new trend and gives promise of better days to come. This Association of free Churches is attaining maturity. The five meetings held, beginning at the Hotel Fort Shelby in Detroit in 1955, have all faced problems essentially similar but differing in detail. Loyalty, insight, and courage have been predominant in all our meetings. But the Los Angeles meeting revealed something which, to this delegate at least, had not been so evident before.

Organizational and Material Progress

Frequently during this meeting attention was called to the amazing work of the Commissions and of the cooperating body, The Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches. More than once we were reminded of the contrast between the timid way in which a missionary goal of $20,000.00 was adopted at Hartford in 1957, and the astonishing way in which, as the Treasurer of the Missionary Society has said, "money has been pouring in." Accomplishments in helping new Churches to help themselves, in aiding such causes as Piedmont College and others, and bringing our own working groups into more efficient activity, — all these indicate an ever improving sense of direction.

All This — And More Besides

Much of this visible progress had been in evidence in Detroit in 1958. But unless this observer was greatly mistaken, a new element appeared in 1959. Any movement which departs from its true nature is on the way to uselessness. The National Association seemed this year to have a new consciousness of its duty, not alone to "Let Freedom Ring" but also to be aware of the sources of its freedom. Congregationalism did not start as a political movement. We have often heard of the debt American democracy owes to the *Mayflower Compact,* but we must recognize that the *Compact* is itself derived from the Congregational principle of the *Covenant.* Our order of free Churches will never fufil its destiny unless back of all its efficiency and resources it is based on those deeply religious principles inherent in the "gathered Church" and "the priesthood of all believers."

There is evidence that the 1959 Annual Meeting saw this. The thoughtful and appreciative reception of the address by Rev. Arthur A. Rouner Jr. on "The Savoy Declaration and Its Meaning For Us Today" showed that the sobering and searching words of that paper were striking a responsive chord in the heart of the listeners. Similar thoughtful discussion in the Seminar on the Ministry, to the effect that we must put new content into the conventional clause, "having devoutly sought the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit," pointed toward a healthful kind of self-examination, without which there can be no re-birth of the Spirit.

The Greatest Task Ahead

We were reminded of the famous words from *Through The Looking Glass.* "It takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run twice as fast as that." When Congregationalists today think of their responsibilities, they must look back as well as ahead, and ponder what the elders and messengers gathered at the Savoy Palace in 1658 put into words, at what the elders and messengers of the Bay Colony Churches had said at Cambridge ten years earlier, expressing the convictions of the martyrs of 1593 and the Pilgrims of 1620. Then we must "run twice as fast" as we are now in order to catch up with them. For the "gathered Church" and "the priesthood of all believers" have a significance of which we have almost lost sight today.

A Resolution on Ordination

Upon recommendation by the Commission on the Ministry, the following Resolution was adopted by the National Association Annual Meeting, as expressing the views of this body on the subject of ordination. This Resolution is especially timely in view of the belief on the same subject set forth in the proposed Constitution and By Laws for the "United Church of Christ."

"It is our belief that ordination to the Christian ministry is not essentially an external and social act, but is rather an inward transaction between God and a man. The outward act of ordination is but the recognition on the part of a Church of this inward calling from God.

"While not denying the validity of other ways of ordination, we hold, as did our fathers, that the gathered Church, being complete under God with all spiritual and ecclesiastical power, has the right to ordain its own minister. The placing of the power to ordain in the hands of a District Association or any ecclesiastical body other than the local Church is without Scriptural support; contrary to Congregationalism in that it denies the completeness of the local Church; and dangerous in that it moves in the direction of giving ecclesiastical authority to bodies which were created by the Churches for fellowship and cooperation only.

"In accordance with the Congregational principle of fellowship, we approve of the calling of councils for advice as to ordination.

"While ordination by the local Church is sufficient, it is conducive to orderliness and the proper recording of the status of ministers that their standing should be registered with a larger body. The act of registering this standing does not confer upon any Association or other body the right to pass upon the qualifications of a minister, but simply to record the fact that he has been ordained by a Church."

FROM THE OLD COUNTRY

A Quarterly Column by Rev. Albert D. Belden, D. D.
London, England

It has been a pleasure to receive THE CONGREGATIONALIST month by month and to read its varied virile and impressive contents. I hope it may find an increasing number of British readers, and I congratulate the Editor and his contributors.

It was a great thrill to receive, on the occasion of the celebration of my double Golden Jubilee of Ministry and Marriage held at Whitefield's Memorial Church, London, on April 15th last, a telegram from Dr. Henry David Gray as Moderator of your Association of Churches, promising a gift of £500 for the current year, to the Pilgrim Church of London in Southwark. Dr. Sidney M. Berry, former Secretary both of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and of the International Congregational Council, was in the Chair, and read the telegram to the large company assembled. It certainly raised the temperature of the gathering and I desire to express both the warmest thanks of Mrs. Belden and myself, and those of the Pilgrim Fathers' Memorial Church to all concerned in this generous and significant gift.

The May Assembly

At the recent May Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, there was a record attendance of delegates. Westminster Chapel found its 3,000 seating capacity taxed to the utmost. Mr. B. Hartwell was inducted into the Chairmanship and, with his inimitable gift of humour, steered the Assembly through its arduous sessions.

There is no space to record those sessions in detail but from the standpoint of your own great controversy, the feature of most interest was the speech of the Presbyterian Moderator, Dr. W. P. Copland Simmons, with its encouragement towards a further investigation of the possibility of union between the English Presbyterian Church and Congregationalism. The Assembly received it with every sign of welcome. Subsequently a motion was made and passed —

> "welcoming the invitation of the Free Church Federal Council to share in the work of a proposed Commission to consider the possibility of Free Church Union and to appoint three representatives."

Free Church Union has been much "in the air" of late. It is to be hoped it will be kept there until we can make quite sure that any Union distilled from these deliberations contains in due measure the Freedom for which Congregationalism, and its sister Independent denomination — the Baptist — peculiarly stand.

This is why the Constitution of the United Church, due, I believe in July next, and in my judgment seriously overdue, will be critical in its effect, and why the position taken by your own Association of Congregational Christian Churches is likely to prove of great value.

A Trustee of Freedom

It cannot be urged too strongly that God in history has made the Congregational Churches a trustee for the ultimate Holy Catholic Church, of the absolutely indispensable principle of Christian Liberty. We British Congregationalists need now to be on the alert remembering that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

There is no need to oppose this necessity, in my judgment, to the Ecumenical ideal, even though the present Ecumenical Movement may seem to jeopardize that Principle. Congregationalists hold the secret of a true Catholicity. We must not assume that that secret cannot be successfully embodied in a better ordering of the varied elements of Church polity at our disposal. It is the shutting down, or the whittling away of that vital principle we must at all costs resist, or the ultimate Unity of Christendom will never be achieved.

After all, in so intricate a problem as undoing the falsities of organization that have disfigured 1500 years of Christianity, we should not be surprised that there should occur here and there false and inadequate starts at remedying the situation. An enthusiasm, long overdue, for that Oneness for which Christ prayed, as I believe, in Gethsemane, is right and proper for all His disciples — but it must be a Oneness in genuine principle — and that is impossible without full Freedom.

We can but wait prayerfully and tolerantly upon the Holy Spirit of God, knowing that "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

News Notes

Reprints Available. Reprints of the article"The 'United Church' of Christ" by James DeForest Murch (CHRISTIANITY TODAY, May 25, 1959) may be obtained from the National Association offices, also reprints of THE CONGREGATIONALIST articles "The Worth of Our Way" (April 1959), "The Constitutional Question" and "Our Historic Fear of Ecclesiasticism" (June 1959).

New Member Churches. Clerk's Certificates have been received at the Executive Secretary's office showing that the First Congregational Church of Fall River, Massachusetts, and the First Congregational Church of Eliot, Maine, have enrolled as member Churches of the National Association.

Pastoral Changes. Mr. George Kemp, who has been serving part time as Interim Pastor of the First Congregational Church of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, has been called to full time service in that Church. ***Rev. Karl Ostberg, Associate Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Pontiac, Michigan, has accepted a call to the pastorate of Mayfair Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio, and began work there on July 1st. ***Mr. Conrad Putzig, a student, has been called to Danby, Vermont, for one year. ***Dr. Arvel M. Steece of the faculty of Northland College, Ashland, Wisconsin, will begin his pastorate in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, on August 1.

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Change of address notices, undeliverable copies, orders for subscriptions, and other mail items should be sent to the Editor.

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GLIMPSES OF THE MEETING

Attendance. Rev. Leonard H. Maunder, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, announced that 91 member Churches were represented by a total of 214 delegates, alternates, and visitors. 22 non-member Churches (the largest number of any Annual Meeting thus far) were represented by 45 observers. Individuals from Alaska, Formosa, and Piedmont College brought the total up to 263. The 113 Churches represented were from 21 states, Michigan leading the list with 22 Churches, followed by California with 17, Massachusetts 12, Illinois, Iowa and Pennsylvania 8 each.

From left to right: Dr. Henry David Gray, Hartford, Connecticut (Moderator 1958–59), Professor George V. Bohman, Royal Oak, Michigan (New Chairman of Executive Committee), Mr. Gordon W. Kingsbury, Lathrup Village, Michigan, (Moderator Elected for 1959–60)

Concerning the Constitution. In view of the fact that the second General Synod of "The United Church of Christ" had not convened at the time of our meeting, the obviously wise decision was reached not to make any statement regarding the draft of the proposed constitution. The Interim Committee of the Executive Committee was authorized to take steps toward arranging for a panel of capable lawyers to make a careful study of this draft if and when it is sent out to the Churches. THE CONGREGATIONALIST will keep its readers informed from time to time on this issue. In the meantime, pamphlets, "The Biblical Basis for Congregationalism" by Dr. Harry R. Butman, and "The Constitutional Question" by Dr. Henry David Gray, have been prepared and are available from the National Association Executive office, 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin, or the Eastern Field Office, 61 East Street, Melrose 76, Massachusetts.

Legal Structure. The Committee appointed to study a proposed legal structure for the National Association and its activities reported the outlines of a plan which would assure the member Churches control over the various Commissions and other bodies through which the Association works. This tentative plan, which was approved in principle, provides for the eventual chartering of a Corporation for the National Association to hold property, gifts, and bequests which may necessitate such an organization.

Young People. One of the noteworthy features of this Annual Meeting was the program for young people. A goodly number of these were present from seven states. Special discussion periods for the Youth Section were conducted by the Executive Secretary and the Moderator. As a result, a recommendation was adopted for the appointment of a Youth Commission, to consist of five adults and five young people, one of whom shall be of college age. Among the events of the meeting which appealed to young and old was the presence at the Wednesday dinner of motion picture actor Charlton Heston with his wife and son. Mr. Heston's offer to give autographs to the young people was eagerly accepted. Mr. and Mrs. Heston are members of the Church of Our Saviour (Congregational), Granada Hills, California.

OUR NEW OFFICERS

The Nominating Committee elected at the 1958 Annual Meeting brought in its report on July 1 and the following officers and committee members were unanimously elected.

Moderator: Mr. Gordon W. Kingsbury, Lathrup Village, Michigan.

Assistant Moderator: Rev. Max Strang, Marshalltown, Iowa.

Secretary: Rev. F. Willard Kime, Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

Treasurer: Mr. Don E. Zentner, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

Executive Committee (4 years):
Rev. Leslie G. Deinstadt, Cheyenne, Wyoming.
Mrs. George J. Mead, Hartford, Connecticut.
Mr. Thomas W. Williams, Galesburg, Illinois.

Executive Committee (3 years, to fill vacancy)
Rev. Leonard H. Maunder, Maywood, Illinois.

Executive Committee (2 years, to fill vacancy)
Rev. John H. Alexander, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

The present Treasurer, Mr. Paul R. Biggs, will continue to serve until December 31, 1959. Deep appreciation of Mr. Biggs' work was expressed, but due to the distance of his residence from the Executive Office, it was deemed best to accept his judgment that he be released at the end of this year.

In Memoriam

We report with sadness the recent deaths of Rev. Dr. Chester F. Dunham, pastor emeritus of Park Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio; Brigadier General (Retired) Sanford H. Wadhams, an active member of Center Congregational Church, Torrington, Connecticut, and a leading organizer of the Connecticut Congregational Fellowship; and Mrs. John F. C. Green, wife of the pastor of the Evangelical Congregational Church, McKeesport, Pennsylvania.

(Due to limitations of space, it is impracticable to publish more than the briefest obituary notices in THE CONGREGATIONALIST. Readers who know of the death of any persons who should be listed here are requested to notify the Editor.)

New members of NACCC Executive Committee,

Rev. Leonard H. Maunder (seated), Rev. John H. Alexander, Rev. Leslie G. Deinstadt, Mrs. George J. Mead
(Not pictured: Prof. Thomas W. Williams)

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

"Where Christ is, there is the Church. The Church appears and works in *every* congregation of believers . . . There is no need of any human priesthood . . . Still less is there any need of a legal constitution. In fact, every form of legal constitution is excluded." With this conviction Rudolph Sohm, professor at Gottingen, Strasburg and Leipzig, wrote his OUTLINES OF CHURCH HISTORY (Beacon $1.95 paperback.)

Here is church history with a difference, written by a noted lawyer, emphasizing the purely spiritual nature of Christianity, avowedly evangelical and Protestant in its outlook. Published originally in 1887, this book deserved reprinting as an antidote to much contemporary churchism. A preface by James Luther Adams of Harvard Divinity School points out Sohm's present merit.

Pious Lutheranism has remarkable affinities with real Congregationalism. Both prefer a layman's church guided by laymen. Both abhor ecclesiastical meddling in political affairs. They uphold the basic difference between Law and Gospel. Both stress personal religion and private responsibility. Each recognizes the utter dissimilarity between Catholicism in any form and the basic Protestantism of the New Testament. Sohm treats all of church history from this stimulating perspective.

"The initial 'fall' of the church was the 'fall' into a legal organization, into a monarchial bureaucratic machinery . . . At the outset the Christian churches were under the leadership of *persons* imbued with the Holy Spirit; then these persons were subsumed under *offices*, and these offices in turn were assigned control of the sacraments (or *things*) . . . Precisely this process of materialization and routinization shows that 'ecclesiastical law contradicts the nature of the church'."

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Rev. Neil H. Swanson Jr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Our New Building Loan Fund

It is good for us to be concerned about the development of new Congregational Churches. We must be ready to help our brethren in expanding communities who want to organize Churches.

This help will be of many sorts. One way will be that of making it possible for a Church to borrow funds at reasonable terms for its building needs. Already, there are substantial needs for this type of assistance from some of our newer Churches.

It can now be announced that a channel through which such assistance can flow has been created. A group of five organizing Directors (including representation from the Commission on Missions and from the Missionary Society) has incorporated The Congregational Christian Church Building Loan Fund, Inc. As soon as possible, the number of Directors will be increased to nine.

By its Articles of Incorporation this new Building Loan Fund exists for the purpose of providing loans for building purposes to Churches which are either members of or are sponsored by the National Association. It will receive recommendations concerning loans from the Commissions on Missions and Church Extension.

Obviously, the new Building Loan Fund cannot lend money until money is made available for this purpose. It is now possible for Churches, church organizations, and individuals either to make direct contributions for this purpose or to lend money at a low rate of interest to the Loan Fund so that it may in turn be loaned to Churches. Such contributions will be deductible for tax purposes.

Where Do You Fit In?

1. Perhaps you can and should make a personal contribution — whatever the size.

2. Perhaps you can encourage your Church to make an annual contribution to this Fund. Talk with the proper people about it.

3. Perhaps you will want to transfer some of your invested funds to the Building Loan Fund. While you would receive a lower return, your money would be used in an excellent way.

4. Perhaps you know of some individual who might be interested in giving or lending some money to the Fund. You could either discuss it with him yourself, or you could send his name to me.

Here is a wonderful opportunity to participate in the development of new churches in every part of the country. Please do what you can to help. All communications to The Congregational Christian Church Building Loan Fund, Inc. can be mailed in care of the National Association to 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin.

WOMEN'S WORK

That Hidden Talent

Mrs. Robert E. Collins, Grand Rapids, Michigan

How many times have we heard, "Oh, I can't do that anymore. Let younger shoulders carry that load." "I've done enough — let someone else take over now."

When is "too old" and when is our usefulness over? May I be bold and say that you are never too old, and there is always something each and everyone can do — perhaps a little help is needed now and then.

Hostesses can provide tea and cookies for a very busy sewing and chatting group mending or marking clothing for a local children's home, piecing quilts, and missionary sewing. Those who no longer sew can entertain the others by turning back the clock of time and reliving by-gone days. Joyous fellowship results and a new interest of shared memories while busy hands are at work. How many have thought of acting as chauffeurs to those who are unsure of their footing, and dare not venture out in the elements alone? Sometimes that is all that's needed to bring out our shut-ins and give them added interest. Some of our veterans in years of service in the church have put their talents to work again, each in her own way — and are setting a goal which will keep many energetic young newcomers busy trying to reach it. And oh, the joy of working together!

Let's dust off that unused talent, polish it, recharge it and put it to work again. There are years of service left if given a chance. Practice up on your best cookie recipe, get the needles and crochet hooks going again. Brush up on your favorite children's stories for baby-sitting. There is many a busy housewife or working wife who would love to be able to get home-made cookies, bread, and goodies. There's always a need for dish cloths, holders, aprons, and all the other pretty useful needs of the home. Many a young mother would leave her young child with an easy mind if she knew he was in loving hands.

Many of our shut-ins would be our most loyal church attenders if some thoughtful person would provide transportation. Many a sewing bee could be actively engaged in the work of the church if one or two would be hostess each meeting day. We are all endowed with a special talent of our own to develop and use and reuse. Let's help each other. A rare opportunity is open to us all. Let's do something about it. Uncover that hidden talent!

THE WOMEN'S SEMINARS

Mrs. Ernest S. Crosby, Buffalo, New York

Two excellent Seminars with more than fifty women in attendance were held on successive days. The first Seminar, entitled: "Programs With A Purpose," was moderated by Mrs. Robert E. Collins of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The introduction was followed by brief constructive talks by members of the Commission on Women's Work: Purpose, Mrs. George Berkaw, Detroit; Spiritual, Mrs. Ernest Crosby, Buffalo; Missionary, Mrs. George J. Mead, Hartford; Service, Mrs. Herbert Phelps, Milwaukee; Study, Mrs. E. E. Adams, Marshalltown, Iowa; Fellowship, Mrs. Roy Goodyear, McKeesport, Pennsylvania; and Ways and Means, Mrs. Robert E. Collins, Grand Rapids. Participation during the discussion period was informal and enthusiastic.

Freedom In Fellowship

The Second day's Seminar entitled: "*How Do YOU Do?*" was introduced by Mrs. George R. Berkaw of Detroit, and brought forth spontaneous discussions containing a wealth of original ideas from North, South, East and West. Ideas for handcraft; projects; film strips; bazaars; ideas for workable programs for young mothers in Women's Fellowships were presented. Study groups and book reviews for the study of the history of Congregationalism were urged as an essential background in proclaiming and keeping our freedom.

Programs and Projects

An urgent invitation was given to the churches to send accounts, in some detail, of programs of interest and projects of all kinds which have been found successful in their fellowship to Mrs. George Berkaw Jr., 16516 Cherrylawn, Detroit 21, Michigan. They will be passed on by the Commission, and Mrs. Phelps, assisting as a volunteer in the Association office, will see that they are mimeographed and made available to all. Let us hear from *you* so that others may know what *you* are doing, and *you* may know what *others* are doing.

"Moments With God"

A beautiful book "just off the press" and published by The Altar Guild of the First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, was introduced to the Seminar. "Moments With God" is a unique collection of Congregational materials as well as prayers for special occasions and devotions for family use. Durable, with a rich red fabric cover, this book is loose-leaf to enable the inclusion of personal materials, and is adaptable to supplements for later publication. It sells for $3.50 plus postage 14¢. With its dignified and beautiful binding and format, the book is lovingly dedicated to the beloved memory of the founder of the Altar Guild, Helen Ramsay Fifield, "whose gracious and happy spirit endeared her to all who knew her." (Orders may be sent to First Congregational Church, 535 South Hoover Street, Los Angeles 5, California.)

Our Shared Benevolence

Discussion of missionary projects made it evident that Piedmont College has been enthusiastically received as a cause of common concern. Women representing many churches urged the continuance of this project and it was voted unanimously to retain support of Piedmont as the Women's Project — our shared benevolence for the year 1960.

A Word Of Appreciation to

Mrs. L. Wendell Fifield and Mrs. Raymond A. Waser for the inspiration which was received through their consecrated devotions at the beginning of each day — and to Mrs. Paul A. Quaintance, whose enthusiasm, devotion, and tireless and efficient efforts through long hours of preparation made the "Women's Seminars" of 1959 a source of inspiration for the year ahead.

OREGON CITY CHURCH OBSERVES ANNIVERSARY

Rev. Horace L. Bachelder

On Centennial Sunday, May 17th, 1959, as part of the Century of Statehood celebration, the Atkinson Memorial Congregational Church welcomed back to its pulpit, Rev. Caradoc Morgan who was minister when the present building was dedicated, thirty five years ago. Among those honored were all those who had been members for a third of a century or longer, including one woman, Mrs. Martha Blakeslee, who joined the church in 1885.

This oldest Congregational Church in the West dates its beginning from May 25, 1844, when it began as Willamette Falls Presbyterian Church, in accordance with the Plan of Union by which so many free Congregationalists in the West were absorbed into Presbyterianism. The name "Presbyterian" was used even though five of seven members were Congregationalists and one was a Baptist. However, Congregational by-laws were adopted which did not conform to presbyterial requirements.

When George Henry Atkinson arrived from New England in 1848 to serve as minister the lone Presbyterian member withdrew and the name of "First Congregational Society of Oregon City" was adopted. Immediately thereafter plans were drawn for a building which soon stood as a solitary Congregational outpost in the Far West.

In 1937 the Oregon City church and society united with the Atkinson Memorial Church of Portland, taking its name and thus honoring Dr. Atkinson who served two pastorates totalling 22 years. Dr. Atkinson is listed in Congregational histories as one of the leaders who helped to organize the National Council of Congregational Churches. He was elected assistant moderator of that body at its first meeting in Oberlin, Ohio in 1871. He is known in Oregon as "the Father of the Public School system" having served as first Superintendent of Schools of the Oregon Territory. At the request of the legislature he drafted Oregon's first school law and made numerous trips east recruiting teachers for the growing state.

Atkinson Memorial Congregational Church
Oregon City, Oregon

In its 115 year history there have been 22 ministers of the church and society. During the last decade the membership has almost tripled and in this Centennial Year of Oregon Statehood this church still stands, as it did a century ago, as a bulwark of free Congregationalism.

A STATEMENT OR A DENIAL?

Rev. Harry W. Johnson, Boise, Idaho

The statement of faith proposed for adoption by The United Church of Christ sounds the death-knell of everything Congregational.

Reciting together a selected list of the "deeds" of God is not a characteristic mode of expression of the Pilgrim spirit. It becomes even less so when those "deeds" of God which have been selected for recital are couched in the language of doctrinal authoritarianism.

The "gathered Church" is not there.

The covenant between believers, entered into freely to form the Church, is not there.

Indeed, the local Church, which in Congregationalism is THE CHURCH, has been completely submerged from view.

The manhood of The Master is not there. The teachings of Jesus are not there. Yet these teachings are the heart and core of the Christian message to the world. On the centrality of these teachings there has been general agreement among us as Congregationalists, whether we be "liberals" or "conservatives." The teachings of Jesus are so true, so relevant, so basic, and so eternal that the greatness of such a Teacher has filled our hearts with grateful loyalty, and our minds with wonder. Herein, and here alone, is the true foundation for Christian unity. Yet, from His day to ours, men have sought to explain His wonderful greatness by offering to us man-made doctrines as to who this Teacher was.

These man-made doctrines have, in this statement of faith, crowded out both the teachings and the Teacher.

Not the Congregational Way

Whatever else it is, this is a document that would dislodge the Jesus of history, and His teachings from their rightful place at the center of the Christian message.

It also brushes into the discard every distinctive emphasis which we, as Congregationalists, have been offering to Protestant thinking in the last four hundred years.

The adoption of such a statement would commit The United Church of Christ to a complete denial of the Congregational Way, — the way of "Ye Lord's free people" who have "joyned themselves by a covenant of the Lord, into a church-estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell."*

*"Plimoth Plantation" — Bradford.

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GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY

Freedom-loving American Congregationalists who have been concerned about the attempted extinction of the Congregational Way of church life in South India will find encouragement in news recently received from that far land.

In 1946, before the establishment of the Church of South India, two London Mission (Congregational) Church members filed a suit in the District Court of Nagercoil in a representative capacity for the 456 London Mission Churches in Travancore. The plaint alleged that the Travancore Church Council (a body comparable to our State Conferences) had no power to take the various London Mission Churches into the Union or to carry out or consummate the Scheme of Union on behalf of these Churches, or to unite with any church which is quite foreign to the principles of the London Mission Church.

At long last, on May 17, 1959, the Court issued a decree stating that the resolution for entering the Church of South India, adopted by the Council, is not binding upon the Travancore Churches since it is illegal and *ultra-vires;* that only those Christians who hold fast to the fundamental principles of the London Mission Church are entitled as of right to conduct divine worship in these churches; and that the former Congregational members of the Church of South India have seceded from the London Mission Church to this new body.

Similarities With Our Cause

Certain parallels between the case of these London Mission Christians against a new centralized church body, and that of American Congregationalists opposed to entering the United Church of Christ may be noted. A 75% vote by the London Mission Churches had been agreed upon, but only 74.6% had been obtained. The Court declared that by that vote the Travancore Church Council "rejected the Scheme of Union."

In spite of failure to get the required percentage the Council entered into the new Union, and the Church of South India proceeded as if the Churches were already in the new body. The findings of the Court are clear that they had no right to do this. Perhaps the most important item for us in these findings is the statement that those who left Congregationalism to enter a national church are "seceders." The defendants (Church of South India) being now in possession of the properties, the Court denied the prayer for an injunction to keep them from using the buildings, but in view of this decree, it seems highly probable that when an eviction order is asked, the Court will grant it.

They Need Our Help

The costs of this lawsuit have become a heavy burden to the London Mission Christians who are struggling against heavy odds to preserve the immemorial Congregational right of self-determination. The report of this Court victory is to many American Congregationalists "good news from a far country," and the generous help of freedom-loving Christians here will be for these Trav-

Continued on Column 2

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

What Hath God Wrought!

I trust that it is a pardonable exercise of editorial prerogative for me to write my own Devotional Column this month. The temptation to do so broke upon me as I was enjoying a new experience en route home from the National Association meeting in Los Angeles. I have often enjoyed watching the scenery from a railroad train window, but that which I saw from the Santa Fe "Super Chief" in Arizona and New Mexico was so different from that which I have enjoyed from the New York Central's "New England States" in the Berkshires, or still more in the Deerfield Valley from the late lamented "Minute Man" of the Boston and Maine, that this was almost bewildering.

Countless square miles of almost level land, mostly sandy, with a tenacious shrub which I assumed was sagebrush, would have been monotonous save for the frequent glimpses of mountains, and even more frequent, the flat topped masses of red sandstone, sometimes with columns of rock which had been separated by erosion and stood forth like prehistoric monuments. As I contrasted this strange but magnificent landscape with that of my familiar New England, the words came to my mind, "What hath God wrought!"

But having the meaning of our recent meetings in mind, the words took on another significance. Was it Phillips Brooks who once said, "It is indeed well to look up through nature to nature's God; but it is even better to look up through mankind to mankind's God." A national meeting of Congregationalists invariably reminds one of those courageous, consecrated men whose memory inspires us. As some of these names went through my mind, — Owen, Penry, Barrow, Robinson, Brewster, Bradford, and a host of others, the same words crowded again into my mind, "What hath God wrought!"

But His works are still going on. He works in nature in never ending creativity. And His works among men do not end, as long as there are men and women who will seek His will and obey it. May we be worthy in our devotion to Him, so that His power may be manifested in us even as it is in the lives of those who have gone before. May our prayer be in the words of the familiar hymn:

"O God, beneath Thy guiding hand
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea,
And where they trod the wintry strand,
With prayer and psalm they worshipped Thee.
And here Thy name, O God of love
Their children's children shall adore;
Till these eternal hills remove
And spring adorns the earth no more."

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ancore Congregationalists another illustration of the words of the Book of Proverbs, "As cold water is to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." (Our contributions may be sent through Dr. Howell D. Davies, Treasurer, Room 2308, 100 North LaSalle St., Chicago 2, Illinois)